

swaying mountains of dirty dishes in the sink,  
suicidal cowboy -- too sad -- on the radio.

While you stumble all night room to  
room, glass of scotch in hand, two left feet,  
kicking up the carpet, knocking over lamps,  
the overflowing ashtrays, a twitch  
in each bloodshot eye,  
rivers, rivers of tears.

-- David Barker

Lakewood CA

#### CHAIN LETTER 1980

In the mail  
comes one of those chain letters.  
It starts with a prayer  
and ends with a warning:

a man who received the letter  
and did not continue it, lost  
his job. Another, not believing  
in it, threw it away  
and died 9 days later.  
PLEASE DO NOT DESTROY THIS.

And so 56 hours after re-  
ceiving this letter, it must be  
on its way (20 times copied)  
to someone else, or my own  
fate is sealed.

Some way to start a Monday.  
A prayer and a death threat.

It says a kind-hearted missionary  
from South America  
started the whole thing.

Last week, there were earthquakes.  
This week, chain letters.  
56 hours have gone by.  
I wait like someone finishing  
the last few lines of a story.  
An O. Henry ending.